

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
September 4, 2020
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM. Those present included Chair Linda Chow, Vice Chair Melissa Martin, Secretary Catherine Mirick, members Sharon Gray and Jim Roberti; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendents Joan Dabrowski and Cynthia Mahr, Director of Human Resources Gayle McCracken, and Director of Student Services Sarah Orlov.

Ms. Chow announced that the meeting is being held remotely and recorded by local media and broadcast live by Wellesley Media.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Howes, Town Meeting Member and WPS parent, expressed his concern that the WPS reopening plan does not consider a full return to school for any age group. He feels that the youngest learners and students with special needs should have priority in returning to school in person on a full time basis.

Sarah Baron of 31 Shirley Road and parent of 3 students in WPS, expressed her disappointment with the failed negotiations between the teachers' union and the Administration, and that WPS has not been able to move forward with in-person learning in a timely manner. She also indicated she is not in support of a District-wide staff and student testing program; she does not feel there has been opportunity for public input concerning the reopening, and feels communication has been lacking.

MOA WITH WELLESLEY EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

Ms. Chow was pleased to announce that the Wellesley Educators Association has ratified the Memorandum of Agreement relative to work expectations and protections during the COVID pandemic. Dr. Lussier provided an overview of the terms of the agreement. He expressed his appreciation for the members of the WEA, the Administration and School Committee who participated in the negotiations and development of this MOA.

Dr. Lussier addressed the need to have the viral testing program in place including baseline testing for all students and staff just prior to reopening and then ongoing surveillance testing just for staff going forward. He believes having these additional layers in conjunction with all other safety measures being taken will provide a path forward for a safe October 1st in-person reopening.

In response to a comment from one of the callers, he indicated there is a plan in place to have high needs students return to in-person learning four days per week. Staff is also continuing to explore ways to bring the youngest learners back to school four days per week, however more time is needed to address logistics.

The Committee thanked Dr. Lussier, his Administrative team and members of the WEA who were involved in the bargaining sessions that worked to develop the MOA.

After some discussion, Ms. Chow entertained a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Wellesley Educators Association and School Committee as presented and ratified by the WEA earlier in the day.

MOVED: Ms. Gray; **SECONDED:** Mr. Roberti; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Mirick – Yes; Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes.; Mr. Roberti - Yes
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENT – REMOTE LEARNING SCHOOL

Dr. Dabrowski was pleased to announce that Mike LaCava, the current Performing Arts Director, has been appointed as the principal of the Remote Learning School.

Mr. LaCava will be using some teacher leaders to deal with the day-to-day operations of the Performing Arts Department, while he continues to provide oversight of the department. In addition, Dr. Dabrowski announced that Toni Carlson, the WPS Director of Libraries and Innovation, will also serve as an RLS administrator supporting RLS teachers in their remote learning pedagogy and instruction.

HHU UPDATE

Ms. Chow left the meeting at 1:45 pm and returned at 2:05 pm

Ms. Gray and Ms. Martin provided an overview of the SBC meeting held on September 3rd, noting that there was some discussion on costs, however a significant portion of the meeting was spent on concept sketches that were brought forward to the SBC by the project team. Two of the options included building the school on the current footprints, both of which include the use of swing space. There was a request to further explore these options and possibly request permission from the MSBA to delay the Town's submission for a few months to fully consider these options. Ms. Gray noted that these concepts had been previously reviewed at length and not supported due to the significant issue of swing space. She indicated that since swing space is under the purview of the School Committee, she was bringing these concepts to the Committee for their consideration.

Both Ms. Gray and Ms. Martin expressed their concern with having these concepts brought forward at this time, as well as the suggestion to delay the project to provide time fully vet the concepts.

After a discussion, the Committee members agreed that this project has been carefully studied for a number of years, and the SBC has been working methodically and thoughtfully through the process, and they are supportive with the project moving forward without delay. They also noted that any model that requires additional swing space is most concerning to the School Committee and the Administration.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 2:06 pm, Ms. Chow entertained a motion to adjourn.

MOVED: Ms. Martin; **SECONDED:** Ms. Mirick; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Mirick – Yes; Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes.; Mr. Roberti - Yes
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Mirick
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

MOA between School Committee and Wellesley Educators Association